

In the claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of fabricating a mask for patterning a semiconductor wafer with at least one feature having rounded edges, comprising the steps of:

providing a mask blank suitable for patterning, said mask blank comprising a substrate and an opaque material formed thereon;

patterning the opaque material with oval or rounded features ~~using an elliptical-shaped energy beam~~;

projecting an energy beam having an elliptical cross-sectional shape onto said mask blank, said elliptical cross-sectional shape defining a long axis and a short axis;

positioning said long axis of said energy beam at a first angular position with respect to said mask blank and providing relative movement between said mask blank and said energy beam to form a first portion of said at least one feature; and

positioning said long axis of said energy beam on said mask blank to a second angular position and providing relative motion movement between said mask blank and said energy beam to form a second portion of said at least one feature.

2. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein an edge along the energy beam long axis is used to pattern oval features on said mask blank.

3. (Original) The method according to Claim 1, further comprising using the mask to fabricate a semiconductor device.

4. (Currently Amended) A method of fabricating a mask for patterning a semiconductor device with at least one feature having rounded edges, comprising the steps of:
- providing a substrate including an opaque material formed thereon;
 - projecting an energy beam onto said substrate ~~mask~~ to form a pattern on the opaque material, portions of the pattern having stair-step shaped edges; and
 - projecting and ~~angularly~~ positioning an elliptical-shaped energy beam onto said substrate ~~at two or more different angular positions~~ ~~mask~~ to reduce the stair-step shaped edges formed on the opaque material.
5. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 4, wherein said step of projecting said energy beam to form ~~forming~~ a pattern comprises forming a pattern having at least one edge having two sides being positioned at substantially right angles to one another to form a substantially right-angle corner, and wherein reducing the stair-step shaped edges comprises smoothing the right-angle corners.
6. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 5, wherein said step of projecting an energy beam to form said pattern comprises using a circular-shaped energy beam.
7. (Original) The method according to Claim 4, wherein the elliptical-shaped energy beam includes a long axis and a short axis, wherein an edge along the energy beam long axis is used to remove the stair-step shaped edges.

8. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 4, wherein said step of projecting an energy beam to form ~~forming~~ a pattern comprises forming oval or rounded features.
9. (Original) The method according to Claim 4, wherein reducing the stair-step shaped edges comprises using a laser or electron energy beam.
10. (Original) The method according to Claim 4, further comprising using the mask to pattern a semiconductor wafer.
11. (Original) The method according to Claim 10, wherein the semiconductor wafer patterned comprises a magnetic random access memory (MRAM) or dynamic random access memory (DRAM) device.
12. (Currently Amended) A method of fabricating a mask for patterning a semiconductor device with at least one feature having rounded edges, comprising the steps of:
- providing a substrate made of a transparent material;
 - depositing an opaque material over the substrate;
 - using a substantially circular-shaped energy beam to form a pattern including oval or rounded features on the opaque material, portions of the oval or rounded features including undesired stair-step shaped edges; and
 - at least partially removing the oval or rounded feature stair-step shaped edges by projecting and angularly positioning an elliptical-shaped energy beam onto said substrate at two or more different angular positions.

13. (Original) The method according to Claim 12, wherein the oval or rounded features stair-step shaped edges include at least one edge having two sides being positioned at substantially right angles to one another to form a substantially right-angle corner, wherein removing the stair-step shaped edges comprises removing the right-angle corners.

14. (Original) The method according to Claim 13, wherein the elliptical-shaped energy beam includes a long axis and a short axis, wherein an edge along the energy beam long axis is used to remove the stair-step shaped edges.

15. (Original) The method according to Claim 14, wherein removing the oval or rounded feature stair-step shaped edges comprises using a laser or electron energy beam.

16. (Original) The method according to Claim 12, further comprising using the mask to fabricate a semiconductor device.

17. (Original) The method according to Claim 16, wherein the semiconductor device fabricated comprises a magnetic random access memory (MRAM) or dynamic random access memory (DRAM) device.

18. (Currently Amended) A method of fabricating a semiconductor device with at least one feature having rounded edges, comprising the steps of:

providing a semiconductor wafer;

~~patterning the semiconductor wafer with a mask, the mask including oval or rounded features;~~

~~forming said mask comprising the steps of:~~

~~providing a mask blank suitable for patterning said mask blank comprising a substrate and an opaque material formed thereon;~~

~~patterning the opaque material with oval or rounded features using an elliptical-shaped energy beam;~~

~~projecting an energy beam having an elliptical cross-sectional shape onto said mask blank, said elliptical cross-sectional shape defining a long axis and a short axis;~~

~~positioning said long axis of said energy beam at a first angular position with respect to said mask blank and providing relative movement between said mask blank and said energy beam to form a first portion of said at least one feature; and~~

~~positioning said long axis of said energy beam on said mask blank to a second angular position and providing relative motion movement between said mask blank and said energy beam to form a second portion of said at least one feature; and feature.~~

patterning the semiconductor wafer with said mask.

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 18, wherein said first portion formed by said energy beam has stair-step shaped edges and the elliptical-shaped energy beam includes a long axis and a short axis, wherein forming said second portion comprises the step of

positioning an edge along the energy beam long axis ~~is used~~ to remove the stair-step shaped edges of the mask.

21. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim ~~18-20~~, wherein removing the stair-step shaped edges of the mask comprises using a laser or electron energy beam.

22. (Original) The method according to Claim 18, further comprising:
depositing a resist layer on the semiconductor wafer, wherein the mask is used to pattern the resist layer.

23. (Original) The method according to Claim 18, wherein the semiconductor device fabricated comprises a magnetic random access memory (MRAM) or dynamic random access memory (DRAM) device.

24-28 (Cancelled)

29. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein said energy beam remains stationary and said mask blank moves.

30. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein said mask blank remains stationary and said energy beam moves.